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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5010
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9728
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6664
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4724
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3412
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0408
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3504
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2586
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7228
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5000
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1636
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: HUMAN RIGHTS MINISTER URGES QUICK
START FOR IIGEP

REF: A. COLOMBO 1929

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 1849

[1](#)C. COLOMBO 1793

[1](#)D. COLOMBO 1676

[1](#)E. COLOMBO 1651

[1](#)F. COLOMBO 1619

[1](#)1. Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe hosted a meeting on December 22 to discuss the status of the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP). Representatives of the sponsoring countries and organizations and relevant Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) officials were in attendance, including Secretary of Justice Suhada Gamlath. DCM announced the Department of State's approval of former Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Arthur Dewey as the U.S. nominee. Samarasinghe emphasized the importance of getting the IIGEP up and running as quickly as possible to observe the work of the Commission of Inquiry (COI). The week of January 22 was agreed to as the target date for IIGEP members to assemble in Colombo for initial meetings with members of the COI. Six eminent person nominations have been approved by the President, one is pending approval, and nominations from the United Kingdom and Australia have not yet been sent to the GSL. The Embassy sent the nomination of Former Assistant Secretary Dewey to the GSL December 22 and issued a press

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release announcing the nomination.

[1](#)2. Secretary Gamlath outlined the progress made so far by the COI, which has met four times. These meetings have focused on defining infrastructure and technical requirements, outlining procedures for recording evidence, screening police officers to work with the COI, and drafting a press release calling for the submission of evidence and information from the public. Samarasinghe underscored the importance of witness protection and pointed out that the success of the COI relies on witnesses being willing to come forward. (Note: The U.S. is seeking to identify and hire as its assistant to the IIGEP a specialist in witness protection. End Note.) He also noted that the COI will continue to meet in the absence of the IIGEP, but will not

hold public hearings until the group is present in Colombo for its initial consultations the week of January 22. The next meeting of the COI is scheduled for December 28.

13. Embassy greatly appreciates efforts of SCA/INS to identify former Assistant Secretary Dewey as the U.S. representative to the IIGEP. We will coordinate with SCA/INS on recruitment of a U.S. assistant to the IIGEP in the field of witness protection.

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